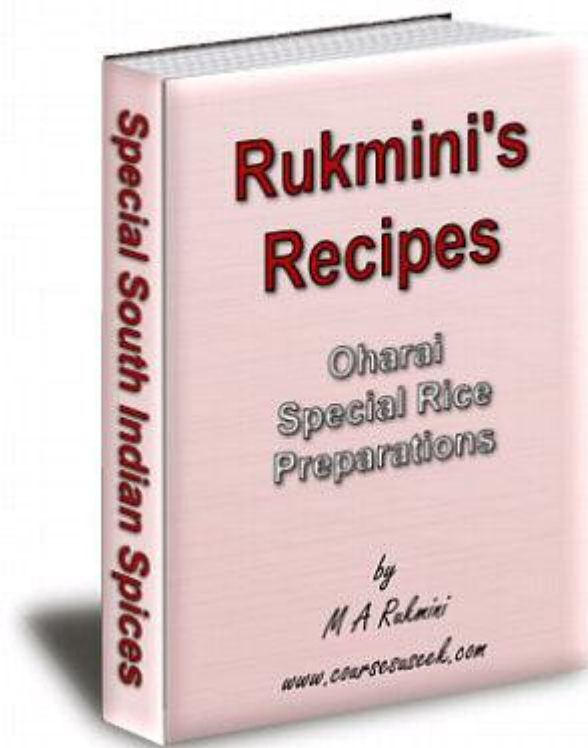


# Oharai: Special Rice Preparations



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## About the Author



**M. A. Rukmini** has been experimenting with different recipes for nearly 60 years. As a mother and grandmother she has spent most of her life in the kitchen preparing innovative dishes for her family and friends with great enthusiasm. Her special powders which add a unique flavour to the items she prepares and her practical wisdom polished by years of experience has gained her popularity in the neighbourhood. She is often flooded with queries on improving dishes and creating new dishes. In this series of eBooks she has tried to share her secrets in such a way that even beginners can cook up mouth watering dishes just as she does. She can be contacted at [rukmini@want2learn.com](mailto:rukmini@want2learn.com)

## Oharai: Special Rice Preparations

Oharai is a rice preparation. A variety of rice preparations are popular in South India. For many of these a special 'podi' or powder is prepared with a unique flavour. During religious festivals and special occasions like the Tamil New Year, along with the usual meal of rice, dāl and vegetables, Pāyasams or porridge and Oharais are specially prepared in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. For Pāyasams or Thirukkamdu refer to the ebook, 'Thirukkamdu: Porridge'.

The South Indians usually begin their meal with a couple of vegetables, rice and dāl. After this first course is finished, the pāyasam is served. Along with Pāyasams Oharai is served. South Indians do not end their meal with sweet desserts. They feel the need for a savoury or a salty item which would balance the sweet. In this ebook on Oharais, there is an item called 'Bakālābath'. Usually that is the last item eaten in the meal and it is prepared in addition to any of the other Oharais described in this ebook. Along with the pāyasam any one of the Oharais will be served and the next course will be the 'Bakālābath' accompanied by a pickle.

## What is Common for all Oharais?

1. In all the Oharais rice is the common factor. In some Oharais vegetables and fruits may be added. In some dāl may be added. But cooked rice will be present in all.
2. A powder, also called 'podi', is prepared for each Oharai. Some of the items like the coriander seeds and red chillies may be common for all the powders. But each powder is different and they are specially made for that particular Oharai. The powder can be prepared and stored for six months in airtight containers without refrigeration and for more time if kept in the fridge. For each Oharai the amount of powder to be added can be more or less, according to individual preferences. If you want it a little spicy you can add more powder and if you prefer it bland you can add less powder.
3. Asafoetida or 'hing' is added to all the powders because of its special quality to aid in digestion.
4. 'Tālitthal' or 'seasoning' means to season the dish with mustard seeds fried in oil. For this two spoonfulls of oil is taken in a pan and heated. After it is heated about 10 gm of mustard seeds are dropped in the oil. As the mustard seeds pop up and crackle, a couple of red chillies are added. Then a spoonful of bengal gram (split) and a spoonful of black gram (split) are added. (For some dishes half a spoonful of cumin is also added.) Then a pinch of asafoetida (hing) is added. Finally curry leaves are added. Later the cooked rice prepared for the Oharai is mixed with this. The ingredients used for Tālitthal add a nice flavour to the dish and they have special nutritional value.
5. For garnishing fresh grated coconut or copra, coriander leaves and curry leaves are used. They enrich the food with their nutritious value, improve the flavour, and also make the Oharais attractive.
6. Groundnuts and sometimes cashew nuts are roasted in oil and used for garnishing the Oharais and making them taste crisp.
7. Pāpad is fried in oil or roasted by exposing them directly to flame and served along with the Oharais. Usually a piece of Pāpad and a spoonful of Oharai are eaten together.

## 101

**Puliyôdarai Special**

## Tamarind Rice Special

**Ingredients required**

1.	Rice	500 gm
2.	oil	250 gm
3.	ground nuts	100 gm
4.	copra	150 gm
5.	tamarind	30 gm
6.	mustard seeds	10 gm
7.	bengal gram (split)	10 gm
8.	black gram (split)	10 gm
9.	curry leaves	10 gm
10.	green coriander	10 gm
11.	jaggery	5 gm
12.	turmeric	1 teaspoon
13.	salt	to taste

**Ingredients to be powdered**

Roast all these ingredients in two spoons of oil. Roast in medium heat for about 10 minutes. If properly roasted the chillies turn crisp and the other ingredients change colour. Keep aside the roasted ingredients to cool and then grind to a fine powder. Now the podi is ready to add to Puliyôdarai.

1.	coriander (seeds)	500 gm
2.	red chillies	5 gm
3.	bengal gram (split)	1 teaspoon
4.	black gram (split)	1 teaspoon
5.	fenugreek	1 teaspoon
6.	pepper	2 teaspoon
7.	cinnamon	a one inch piece
8.	asafoetida (hing)	a one inch piece

## Procedure

Cook the rice in a pressure cooker with less water. If properly cooked the rice should not look like a paste and the granules should stand separate. Basmati rice is usually used for Puliyoðarai. However, other rice varieties can also be used. Take a big vessel and spread the cooked rice. Add a teaspoon of turmeric powder and a tablespoon of oil. Keep it aside to cool.

Soak the tamarind in a bowl of warm water for 3 minutes. Squeeze the tamarind, take the essence and boil it in a pan. Initially the essence will have a lot of water content because water is poured on tamarind two or three times to get the essence. Allow the tamarind essence to boil till it loses its water content and turns into a thick paste. Add about 5 gm of jaggery when the tamarind essence is boiling. After it becomes a thick paste remove it from the fire and keep it aside to cool.

Prepare the powder or the ‘podi’ and keep it ready to mix with the rice.

By now the rice must have become cool and it is ready to be mixed with the other ingredients. The powder and tamarind paste should not be mixed with the rice when it is hot.

Prepare for thālithal or seasoning. In a pan heat two spoonfulls of oil and put some mustard seeds and two red chillies in it. After the mustard seeds crackle and pop up and after you get a delightful smell add a spoonful of bengal gram (split) and a spoonful of black gram (split). Add a pinch of asafoetida (hing). Finally add the curry leaves. Take it out of the fire and pour it on the rice along with the oil. Now add the powder that you have specially made, the tamarind paste and salt to your taste. You can add less or more powder according to how spicy you want the rice to be. Similarly, you can add less or more tamarind paste according to how sour you want the rice to be. Mix the rice and these ingredients gently and carefully without mashing the rice. Roast the groundnuts in oil and spread it on the rice. Decorate the rice with grated copra, chopped coriander leaves and curry leaves. Leave it aside for 30 mts.

Now Puliyoðarai is ready to serve.

The Puliyoðarai tastes still better the next day as it has more time to absorb the flavour of the ‘Puliyoðara Podi’ and the tamarind essence.

## 102

**Puliyôdarai Instant**

Tamarind Rice Instant

**Ingredients required**

1. tamarind	250 gm
2. oil	250 gm
3. ground nuts	100 gm
4. copra	150 gm
5. mustard seeds	10 gm
6. bengal gram (split)	10 gm
7. black gram (split)	10 gm
8. curry leaves	10 gm
9. green coriander	10 gm
10. jaggery	10 gm
11. turmeric	1 teaspoon
12. salt	to taste

**Ingredients to be powdered**

Roast all these ingredients in two spoons of oil. Roast in medium heat for about 10 minutes. If properly roasted the chillies turn crisp and the other ingredients change colour. Keep aside the roasted ingredients to cool and then grind to a fine powder. Now the podi is ready to add to Puliyôdarai.

1. coriander (seeds)	500 gm
2. red chillies	5 gm
3. bengal gram (split)	1 teaspoon
4. black gram (split)	1 teaspoon
5. fenugreek	1 teaspoon
6. pepper	2 teaspoon
7. cinnamon	a one inch piece
8. asafoetida (hing)	a one inch piece

## Procedure

Soak the tamarind in a bowl of warm water for 5 minutes. Squeeze the tamarind, take the essence and repeat the process a number of times ( adding water each time) till all the essence is taken out of the tamarind. Heat this essence and let it boil. Keep the flame low and keep stirring periodically. You can also keep the pan partly covered. The essence will bubble and burst as it boils and it is better to wear a glove for stirring. Initially the essence will have a lot of water content because water is poured on tamarind two or three times to get the essence. Allow the tamarind essence to boil till it loses its water content and turns into a thick paste. Add about 10 gm of jaggery when the tamarind essence is boiling. After it becomes a thick paste remove it from the fire and keep it aside.

Prepare the powder or the ‘podi’ and keep it ready to mix with the tamarind paste.

Prepare for thālittal or seasoning. In a pan heat two spoonfulls of oil and put some mustard seeds and two red chillies in it. After the mustard seeds crackle and pop up and after you get a delightful smell add a spoonful of bengal gram (split) and a spoonful of black gram (split). Add a pinch of asafoetida (hing). Finally add the curry leaves. Take it out of the fire and pour it on the tamarind paste along with the oil. Now add the powder that you have specially made and salt to your taste. Roast the groundnuts in oil and add it to this paste and powder mixture. Add grated copra, turmeric powder, chopped coriander leaves and curry leaves. Store this mixture in an airtight container. This Puliyôdarai mix will last for 6 months without refrigeration and more than 6 months if kept in the fridge.

Whenever you want to prepare Puliyôdarai, all that you need to do is to cook rice and add this mixture to it. The advantage is that it can be prepared instantly and even if you want to prepare 1 cup of puliyodara, it is possible to do so by adding the required amount of this mixture.

Now Puliyôdarai Instant is ready to serve.

## 103

### **Ulundorai** Black gram Rice

#### **Ingredients required**

1. rice	500 gm
2. black gram (split)	100 gm
3. water	500 gm
4. clarified butter	2 tablespoons
5. cashew nut	50 gm
6. copra	25 gm
7. curry leaves	10 gm
8. green coriander	10 gm
9. pāpad	8
10. salt	to taste

#### **Procedure**

Roast the cashew nuts in clarified butter, take them out when they are golden brown and keep them aside. Roast black gram (split) in the same clarified butter. When it turns brownish add the rice and half a litre water. Cook in a pressure cooker or separately. Add salt to taste and mix well. Crush 4 Pāppads, not to a powder but medium sized pieces, and add to the rice. Mix well. Decorate with roasted cashew nuts, coriander leaves and curry leaves. Sprinkle some copra on the rice. Keep the remaining four Pāppads around the pan in such a way that it surrounds the rice.

Now Ulundorai is ready to serve.

## 104

**Elumitcham Sādam**

Lemon Rice

**Ingredients required**

1. rice	3 cups
2. water	6 cups
3. lemon	4 pieces
4. oil	2 tablespoons
5. Mustard	1 teaspoon
6. red chillies	2 pieces
7. bengal gram (split)	1 teaspoon
8. black gram (split)	1 teaspoon
9. curry leaves	10 leaves
10. turmeric powder	1 teaspoon
4. salt	to taste

**Procedure**

Cook rice with water. Prepare for thālithal or seasoning. For seasoning, take two spoons of oil in a pan, heat it and put the mustard seeds in the oil. When the mustard seeds start popping and crackling add the red chillies. Then add the bengal gram (split) and black gram (split). Add a pinch of asafoetida (hing). Finally add the curry leaves. Add the cooked rice, salt and turmeric powder and mix well. Remove from fire and add the lemon juice. Mix well. You can also decorate the dish with roasted cashew nuts, chopped coriander and curry leaves.

Now Elumitcham Sādam is ready to serve.

## 105

**Tengā Sādam**

Coconut Rice

**Ingredients required**

1. rice	3 cups
2. water	6 cups
3. coconut	200 gm
4. oil	2 tablespoons
5. Mustard	1 teaspoon
6. bengal gram (split)	1 teaspoon
7. black gram (split)	1 teaspoon
8. red chillies	2 pieces
9. curry leaves	10 leaves
10. turmeric powder	1 teaspoon
11. salt	to taste

**Procedure**

Cook rice with water. Prepare for thālithal or seasoning. For seasoning, take two spoons of oil in a pan, heat it and put the mustard seeds in the oil. When the mustard seeds start popping and crackling add the red chillies. Then add the bengal gram (split) and black gram (split). Add a pinch of asafoetida (hing). Finally add the curry leaves. Add the coconut and roast for a minute. Add the cooked rice and salt. Mix well. You can also decorate the dish with roasted cashew nuts, chopped coriander and curry leaves.

Now Tengā Sādam is ready to serve.

## 106

### **Ven Pongal** White Rice Special

#### **Ingredients required**

- |                       |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. rice               | 3 cups        |
| 2. green gram (Split) | 1 cup         |
| 3. water              | 7 cups        |
| 4. copra              | 1 cup         |
| 5. clarified butter   | 5 tablespoons |
| 6. cumin              | 2 teaspoons   |
| 7. pepper             | 2 teaspoons   |
| 8. cashew nut         | 3 tablespoons |
| 9. asafoetida         | a pinch       |
| 10. salt              | to taste      |

#### **Procedure**

Roast cashew nuts in clarified butter, remove and keep aside. Roast rice and split green gram for 2 minutes in 3 spoons of clarified butter, add water and cook. It can be cooked in the pressure cooker. Roast cumin and pepper in a spoonful of clarified butter and add it to the rice. Roast the copra in a dry pan (without clarified butter). Mix part of it with the rice and mix well. Part of it can be used for garnishing the dish. Add salt and mix well. Remove from fire, add a spoonful of clarified butter on top. Garnish with cashew nuts and roasted copra. Keep it covered for 5 mts.

Now Ven Pongal is ready to serve.

## 107

## **Bisi Bèlā**

### Dāl Rice Special

### **Ingredients required**

1. rice	2 cups
2. split gram	2 cups
3. water	6 cups
4. oil	1 cup
5. clarified butter	5 tablespoons
6. tamarind	50 gm
7. coconut	150 gm
8. mustard	1 teaspoon
9. red chillies	2
10. bengal gram (split)	1 teaspoon
11. black gram (split)	1 teaspoon
12. asafoetida	a pinch
13. curry leaves	10
14. salt	to taste

### **Ingredients to be powdered**

Roast all these ingredients in two spoons of oil. Roast in medium heat for about 10 minutes. If properly roasted the chillies turn crisp and the other ingredients change colour. Keep aside the roasted ingredients to cool and then grind to a fine powder. Now the podi is ready to add to Bisi Bèlā.

1. coriander (seeds)	10 tablespoons
2. bengal gram (split)	1 tablespoon
3. black gram (split)	1 tablespoon
4. red chillies	8
5. cinnamon	1 inch piece
6. asafoetida	a pinch

## Procedure

Cook rice and dāl together with water. Soak the tamarind in a bowl of water, squeeze the essence and add it to the rice and dāl mixture.

Powder the ingredients like coriander (seeds), red chillies and dāl. Add coconut to the powder and grind it to a paste in the mixer with a little water. Add this paste to the rice and dāl mix.

Prepare for thālithal or seasoning. For seasoning, take two spoons of oil in a pan, heat it and put the mustard seeds in the oil. When the mustard seeds start popping and crackling add the red chillies. Then add the bengal gram (split) and black gram (split). Add a pinch of asafoetida (hing). Finally add the curry leaves. Add the cooked rice and dāl and stir. Add the required amount of salt. Mix well. Add a spoonful of oil and stir for 2 minutes. Repeat the process after adding another spoonful of oil. Add two spoons of clarified butter and stir again. The mixture turns to a sort of paste as you stir repeatedly. Remove from fire. Decorate with curry leaves. Add two spoons of clarified butter and keep the dish covered for 10 mts.

Now Bisi Bēlā is ready to serve.

## 108

## Vāngi Bāth

### Brinjal Rice Special

#### Ingredients Required

1. brinjal	1 kg
2. rice	4 cups
3. water	7 cups
4. tamarind	10 gm
5. lemon	2
6. coconut or copra	250 gm
7. oil	150 gm
8. salt	to taste
9. mustard	1 teaspoon
10. red chillies	2
11. bengal gram (split)	1 teaspoon
12. black gram (split)	1 teaspoon
13. asafoetida	a pinch
14. turmeric powder	a pinch
15. curry leaves	10

#### Ingredients to be Powdered

Roast all these ingredients in two spoons of oil. Roast in medium heat for about 10 minutes. If properly roasted the chillies turn crisp and the other ingredients change colour. Keep aside the roasted ingredients to cool and then grind to a fine powder. Now the podi is ready to add to Vāngi Bāth.

1. coriander (seeds)	50 gm
2. bengal gram (split)	2 tablespoons
3. black gram (split)	2 tablespoons
4. red chillies	8
5. cinnamon	1 inch piece
6. asafoetida	a pinch

## Procedure

Cook rice with water, add a pinch of turmeric powder, some curry leaves and a spoonful of oil and keep it aside. Prepare for the thālitthal or seasoning. For this take two spoons of oil in pan and heat it. Add some mustard seeds. When they begin to pop up add the red chillies, bengal gram (split) and black gram (split). Add a pinch of asafoetida. After this add the brinjals and roast for 3 minutes. Take the essence out of the tamarind and add to the brinjal. Prepare the powder of coriander (seeds) and other ingredients mentioned and add it to the brinjal. Add freshly grated coconut or copra and add salt. Boil this mixture with brinjal for 5 minutes. Mix the rice with brinjal and stir a couple of times to mix well. Remove from fire and add lemon juice. Decorate the dish with curry leaves. You can also use freshly chopped coriander leaves. Leave aside for 10 mts.

Now Vāngi Bāth is ready to serve.

## 109

## Kadambam

### Vegetable Rice Special

#### Ingredients Required

1. rice	2 cups
2. split gram	2 cups
3. water	6 cups
4. clarified butter	100 gm
5. oil	100 gm
6. coconut	150 gm
7. cucumber	1
8. beans	200 gm
9. brinjal	100 gm
10. potato	50 gm
11. sweet potato	50 gm
12. elephant foot	50 gm
13. elephant ear	50 gm
14. Bangalore brinjal	1
15. bitter gourd	2
16. cluster beans	50 gm
17. French beans	50 gm
18. peas	500 gm
19. Indian beans	100 gm
(to be soaked in water the previous night)	
20. salt	to taste
21. mustard	1 teaspoon
22. red chillies	2
23. bengal gram (split)	1 teaspoon
24. black gram (split)	1 teaspoon
25. asafoetida	a pinch
26. turmeric powder	a pinch
27. curry leaves	10

## Ingredients to be Powdered

Roast all these ingredients in two spoons of oil. Roast in medium heat for about 10 minutes. If properly roasted the chillies turn crisp and the other ingredients change colour. Keep aside the roasted ingredients to cool and then grind to a fine powder. Now the podi is ready to add to Kadambam.

1. coriander (seeds)	100 gm
2. bengal gram (split)	2 tablespoons
3. black gram (split)	2 tablespoons
4. pepper	1 tablespoon
5. fenugreek	1 tablespoon
6. red chillies	10
7. cinnamon	1 inch piece
8. asafoetida	a pinch

## Procedure

Cook dāl in water. When it is half cooked put the vegetables in it. While adding the vegetables those which take a longer time to cook are added first and those which take the least time to cook are added the last. The Indian beans have to be soaked in warm water overnight. It is the hardest to cook. So after the dāl is half cooked first add the Indian beans. Then add the potato, sweet potato, elephant foot and elephant ear. Soak the rice for 10 minutes and then add it to the dāl and vegetables. Add a pinch of turmeric powder. Keep stirring and ensure that all the items are cooked well.

Prepare the powder, grind it with coconut and a little water in a mixer. Add this paste to the rice-dāl-vegetable mixture. Soak the tamarind in water, take the essence and add it to the mixture. Add the required amount of salt. This preparation is called the Kadambam which means a mixture of all sorts of things. [In day-to-day life when one Tamilian tells another, 'Don't make a Kadambam out of it', s/he means that the person should not mix too many things together without proper planning.]

Prepare for tālitthal or seasoning. For this take two spoons of oil in pan and heat it. Add some mustard seeds. When they begin to pop up add the red chillies, bengal gram (split) and black gram (split). Add a pinch of asafoetida. Season the Kadambam with this. Decorate further with curry leaves and chopped coriander leaves. You can also prepare Vadā and add it to the Kadambam. Leave aside for 15 mts.

Kadambam tastes much better the next day as it has more time to absorb the flavours of all the ingredients and the setting time helps all the ingredients to mix their individual qualities harmoniously with one another.

You can also make Vadai and add it to Kadambam. To make Vadai, black gram (split), bengal gram (split) and split gram are taken in equal quantities and soaked in water for half an hour. Then they are ground to a paste with about 4 red chillies, salt and a pinch of asafoetida. Heat 500 gm oil in a pan. Make balls or flat round shapes of the paste you have made and drop them in the heated oil. Fry till they are golden brown. Remove from oil and add to Kadambam.

You can use some other vegetables also according to your preference. It is also possible to prepare the Kadambam without some of the vegetables mentioned.

Now Kadambam is ready to serve.

## 110

## Bakālābāth

### Curd Rice Special

#### Ingredients Required

1. rice	4 cups
2. curd	1 cup
3. water	8 cups
4. milk	2 cups
5. coconut	150 gm
6. butter	25 gm
7. cucumber	1
8. raw mango	1
9. banana (fruit)	1
10. grapes (green, seedless)	50 gm
11. ginger	5 gm
12. curry leaves	10
13. green coriander	4 teaspoons
14. salt	to taste
15. mustard	1 teaspoon
16. cumin	1 teaspoon
17. bengal gram (split)	1 teaspoon
18. black gram (split)	1 teaspoon
19. red chillies	2
20. asafoetida	a pinch

## Procedure

Cook rice in water. Keep it aside to cool. Grate cucumber, raw mango, ginger and coconut and add them to the cooked rice after it becomes cool. Add banana and grapes. You can also add other fruits like pomegranate, black grapes and straw berries.

Prepare for tālitthal or seasoning. For this take two spoons of oil in pan and heat it. Add some mustard seeds. When they begin to pop up add the red chillies, cumin, bengal gram (split) and black gram (split). Add a pinch of asafoetida. Add the curry leaves. Add all this to the rice. Add butter, salt and curd and mix well. If the curd is too thick and if it is to be diluted, add milk. It is better to add milk to dilute the curd than adding water.

Garnish the dish with chopped coriander and curry leaves. Leave aside for 5 mts. Now Bakālābāth is ready to serve.